

From the Literary Souvenir.

THE LOTTERY TICKET.

Mr. Richard Fogrum, or, as his old acquaintances would more familiarly than respectfully designate him, Dick Fogrum, or, as he was sometimes styled on the superscription of a letter from a tradesman or poor relation, Richard Fogrum, Esq., had for some years retired from business, although he had not yet passed what is called the middle age; and, turning his back on his shop, where he had made, if not a considerable fortune, at least handsome competency, rented a small house at Hackney, or, as he was pleased to term it, in the country. His establishment united a due attention to comfort, with economy and prudence. Besides a kitchen-maid and an occasional charwoman or errand boy, Mr. Fogrum possessed, in the person of the trusty Sally Sadlins, an excellent superintendent of his little *menage*. Sally was not exactly *gouvernante*, or housekeeper, at least she assumed none of the dignity attached to such a post; she seemed indeed hardly to have a will or opinion of her own, but had so insensibly accommodated herself to her employer's ways and humours, that by degrees the apparent distance between master and servant diminished, and as Sally, though far from talkative herself, was a good listener, Mr. Fogrum began to find a pleasure in relating to her all the little news and anecdotes he usually picked up in his daily walk.

Let it not, however, be supposed that there was anything equivocal in the kind of unconscious courtesy which existed between these two personages; a single glance at Sally would have convinced the most ingenious fabricator of scandal, and dealer in innuendoes, that here there was no foundation on which to build even the slightest surmise of the kind, for both Sally's person and face were to her a shield that would have rebutted any notion of the sort. Alas! that Nature, so extolled by every poet for her impartiality, should be at times so capricious in her favours, and bestow her gifts so grudgingly, even on those whose very sex entitles them to be considered fair! "Kind goddess," as Will of Avon styles thee, surely thou didst, in this instance, behave most unfairly, bestowing on Sally Sadlins an elevation of figure that, had she been of the other sex, might have raised her to the rank of a corporal of grenadiers. Yet, if thou gavest her an aspiring stature, thou gavest her no aspiring thoughts; and if thou didst deny to her softness of person, fortunately for her peace, thou didst not gift her with the least susceptibility of heart. If Sally was not *loveable*, there was no woman on earth who could possibly have regretted it less. Indeed, I may safely aver, the idea of love never for an instant entered her head, much less had a single twinge of it ever touched her heart. She had heard people talk of love; and she supposed—if indeed she ever bestowed a thought on the subject—that there must be some-

thing in the world so called, otherwise people would not have invented a name for it; but she could no more pretend to say what it was, than to describe the ingredients of the air she breathed. In short, Sally was the most guileless, simple, and disinterested of mortals that ever entered beneath the roof of a single gentleman, to be the first servant where there was no mistress.

Well, therefore, might Mrs. Thoms, who was aware that elderly gentlemen in her "dear" uncle's situation, are not always gifted with that discretion that befits their years, but sometimes commit themselves to wedlock, in an unwary moment, to the no small prejudice of their affectionate relatives: well, I say, might the prudent Mrs. Thoms congratulate herself on having found such a treasure, so invaluable a jewel, as Sally Sadlins. She was certain that from this quarter, at least, there was nothing to be apprehended—nothing to intercept her "dear" uncle's three per cents. from what she considered the legitimate object of their destination. Some alarm, indeed, had been excited in her mind, by hearing that Mr. Fogrum had been seen rather frequently of late knocking at the door of Mrs. Simpson; but then again she thought that he could not possibly be led thither by any other motive than that of chatting away an hour with the widow of an old friend; beside, this lady was not likely either to lead, or to be led, into matrimony. In her younger days, Mrs. Simpson might have been pretty, but none of her acquaintance could recollect *when*. She still patched; yet the patch was applied not where coquetry would have placed it, but where necessity dictated, namely, over the left eye. Mrs. Thoms, therefore, consoled herself with the reflection, that it was better her uncle should knock at Mrs. Simpson's door than at that of a more attractive fair one.—No! her uncle, she was perfectly satisfied, would never marry.

"What have you got there, Sally?" said Mr. Fogrum to his housekeeper, one day, as she drew something from her pocket, while standing before the sideboard opposite to him. "An't please you, sir," replied Sally, in a meek, but no very gentle voice, "it's a bit o' summat I was going to show you. You know, sir, my uncle Tim took leave of me yesterday, before he goes to sea again, and so he gave me this paper, which he says may chance to turn up trumps, and make me comfortable for life."

"Well, let me see what it is, Sally—is it the old fellow's will?—Hum!—why, Sally, this is a lottery ticket!—a whole lottery ticket; yet I will venture to say not worth more than the rag of paper 'tis printed on. I have myself tried the lottery, times and often, ere now, and never got anything but—disappointment. 'A blank, sir, a blank'—that was the only answer I ever obtained from them. What could possibly induce your

uncle to lay out his cash in so foolish a manner? 'Tis never worth either keeping or thinking about. No. 123, confound it! I know it well, I once purchased a share of it myself—the very first I ever bought, when I was quite a lad; and well do I recollect that I chose it out of a whole heap, and thought myself very fortunate in obtaining one with such a sequence of figures—one, two, three."

Most composedly did Sally take the ticket again, not at all disconcerted at this denunciation of ill luck, but on the contrary, with a calmness worthy of a stoic. 'Tis true, she did not, like Patience on a monument, absolutely smile at grief; but then, Sally never smiled, nor would a smile, perhaps, if the rigidity of her face would have permitted such a relaxation of its muscles, have tended greatly to heighten the attractions of her countenance.

Her master in the meanwhile continued eating and wondering, and wondering and eating, until he could neither eat nor wonder more; but dismissing Sally with the dinner things, turned himself quietly to the fire, and took his pipe.

Mrs. Thoms was sitting one morning cogitating on some mischief that she again began to apprehend from the widow Simpson, in consequence of certain intelligence she had the day before received, respecting that lady's designs upon the person of her uncle, when she was suddenly startled from her reverie by a loud rapping at the door, and instantly afterwards who should enter the parlour but the very subject of her meditations—Mrs. Simpson herself.

The appearance of so unusual a visitor would alone have sufficed to surprise her; but there was something in the good lady's manner and countenance, that denoted she came upon a very important errand.

"Why, Mrs. Thoms," exclaimed she, almost breathless, as soon as she entered, "have you heard?—your uncle!"

"Good heavens!" cried Mrs. Thoms, "what do you mean?—what has happened?—my poor dear uncle—ill—dying!"

"Compose yourself, Mrs. Thoms—not dying—but I thought you might have heard!"

"Heard what?—some accident, I suppose?—poor dear man!"

"No; no accident," returned the widow, who by this time had somewhat recovered her breath; "but something very strange—most unaccountable. What you may think of it, I know not, but for my part I think that Mr. Fogrum has acted—I shall not say how."

"And pray, ma'am," said Mrs. Thoms, who now began to think that it was some quarrel between them, of which the widow came to inform her, "what has Mr. Fogrum done, that you should come in this strange manner, and make so great a fuss about it? It is some nonsense, after all, I dare say."

"Nonsense, forsooth!—well, I declare!—how-

ever, it certainly is no business of mine, ma'am," returned Mrs. Simpson, quite nettled at her reception; "and as I suppose you know what has taken place, and approve of it, I have nothing further to say."

Mrs. Thoms now became unaffectedly alarmed, and apprehending she knew not what, requested to be informed what had happened, without further delay.

"Why ma'am, then, Mr. Fogrum is—married, that's all."

To describe the effects these words had upon Mrs. Thoms, would be impossible, and to paint the expression of her countenance, equally unavailing.

"Married!" screamed she out, at length, as soon as she could draw her breath, "Married!—impossible—to whom?"

"To whom?—to Sally Sadlins, ma'am."

"To Sally Sadlins!—impossible—you must be joking."

"Not I, I assure you. I'm not a person, Mrs. Thoms, to make such jokes. I myself saw them, less than an hour ago, pass by my window in a post-chaise together, and then learnt the whole story from those who saw them step into it, at the church door."

"Oh! Mrs. Simpson, how have I been deceived in that insinuating hussy, Sally Sadlins! She who seemed so staid, so discreet—so very unlikely a person. What an old fool he must be, to marry so vulgar a frump!"

"Nay, do not agitate yourself, my dear ma'am," said Mrs. Simpson, who, now having disburthened herself of her secret, and her own mortification being perhaps carried off by that of Mrs. Thoms's, which acted as a conductor to it, had quite regained her composure—"for my part, I hope he may not repent of his match."

"Oh, Thoms!" exclaimed the other lady, as her husband entered the room, "Here is news for us!—my silly old uncle has actually, this very morning, married his maid-servant!"

"That is most confoundedly unlucky," cried Thoms, "though I much doubted whether all your management and manœuvring, for which you gave yourself so much credit, would be to any purpose."

"But who could dream of such a thing! I have no patience with him for having married as he has done."

"Well, my dear, there's no helping it; and, perhaps, after all, since he is married, it is quite as well for us that he has chosen as he has."

While Mrs. Thoms was ejaculating and bewailing—now abusing poor Sally as an artful seducing woman, who, under the mask of the greatest simplicity, had contrived to work upon her uncle's weakness—and anon venting her reproaches against the latter, for suffering himself to be thus duped—a post chaise was seen rolling along on the road to —, with the identical pair seated in it, who were the subject of this invective.

tive and clamour. The intelligence of which, Mrs. Simpson had been the unwelcome messenger, was, in fact, correct in every particular; for Richard Fogrum, single man, and Sally Sadlins, spinster, had that very morning been lawfully united in wedlock, although, but a few days before, had any one prognosticated such an event, they would no more have believed it possible than Mrs. Thoms herself.

"Now, my dear Sally," said the somewhat stale Benedict, laying his hand rather gently than amorously on that of the bride, for which, by the bye, it was really no match in size, "I doubt not but my niece will be in a towering passion when she hears of this: however, no matter, let her, and the rest of the world, say what they please. I do not see why a man may not just as well follow his own fancies as those of other persons." Besides, Sally, though folks may think that I might have made a more advantageous match, in point of fortune, at least, they may perhaps be in error. I have a piece of intelligence to communicate, of which, perhaps, you little dream. You recollect that lottery ticket?—well! passing the 'Lucky Corner,' by the Mansion-House, two days ago, I beheld, peered up at the window, 'No. 123, £20,000!!' Ha! ha! Sally; well did I recollect those figures again—one, two, three! they follow each other as naturally as A, B, C. So home I came, but determined to say nothing of the matter till now."

The reader has already been informed that Sally was the most phlegmatic of her sex; still it may be supposed that such an interesting disclosure would have elicited some ejaculation of exultation, even from the lips of a stoic. Yet Sally, with wonderful composure, merely replied, "La! now that is curious."

"Curious! yes, but I assure you, it is quite true: I am not joking."

"Well; what an odd turn things do sometimes take!"

"Odd, indeed! for who would have thought

that my identical unlucky number, 123, should bring you—I may say us, Sally—twenty thousand pounds!"

"But, sir, Mr. Fogrum, you are mistaken, I mean to say"—

"No mistake at all, my dear—quite certain of it—took down the numbers in my pocket-book—see here—123, £20,000! Is not that the number of your ticket?"

"Yes; but"—

"But, what?"

"Why, you won't hear me, Mr. Fogrum," said Sally, mildly. "I was only going to say that two months ago—I sold the ticket."

"How!—what!—sold!" groaned out poor Fogrum, and sunk gasping against the side of the chaise.

"Now pray don't distress yourself, Mr. Fogrum," said Sally, without the least visible emotion, or any change in her tone; "did you not, yourself, tell me it was not worth keeping; so I thought—well, Master must know better about these matters than I, therefore I may as well make something of it while I can;" so I changed it away for this nice white shawl, which the man said was quite a bargain—only do feel how fine it is."

"Sally!—woman!—a bargain!—twenty thousand pounds!"

Here let me drop the curtain, for none but a master-hand could do justice to the bridegroom's feelings, and I will not impair the effect by attempting to heighten it. I have only to add, that Mr. Fogrum eventually regained his usual composure, and was once known even to relate the story himself over a glass of his best whiskey, as a droll anecdote in his life.

Matrimony made no visible alteration in his *menage*, nor in his bride, for the only difference it caused with respect to the latter, was, that she sat at table instead of standing by the sideboard; that she was now called Mrs. Fogrum instead of Sally Sadlins.

L.